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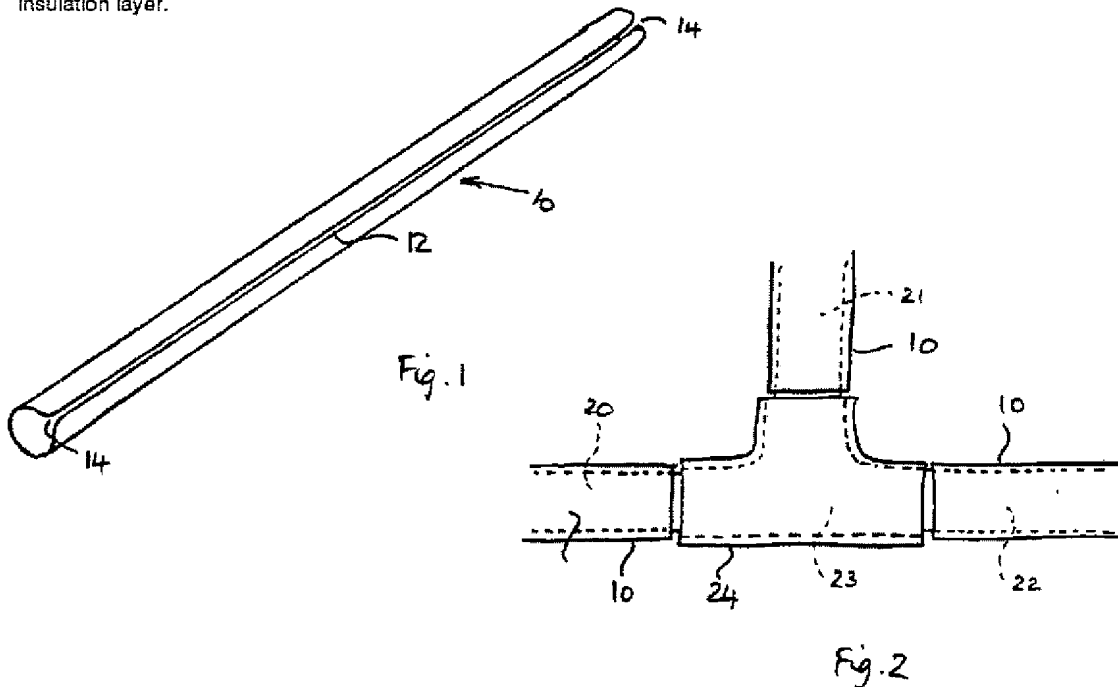
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(54) Decoration of pipes

(57) In order to decorate a pipe, a pre-formed tube 10 or cover 24 is snap-fitted over the pipe. The tube 10 itself already has a decorative finish such that when the tube is snapped onto the pipe, the decorative finish is applied to the pipe. The tube 10 has a longitudinal slit so that it can be snapped onto a pipe without disturbing the pipe. Moulded, snap-on covers 24 are also provided to provide complimentary decoration for pipe brackets and pipe joints. The tube 10 may have an insulation layer.



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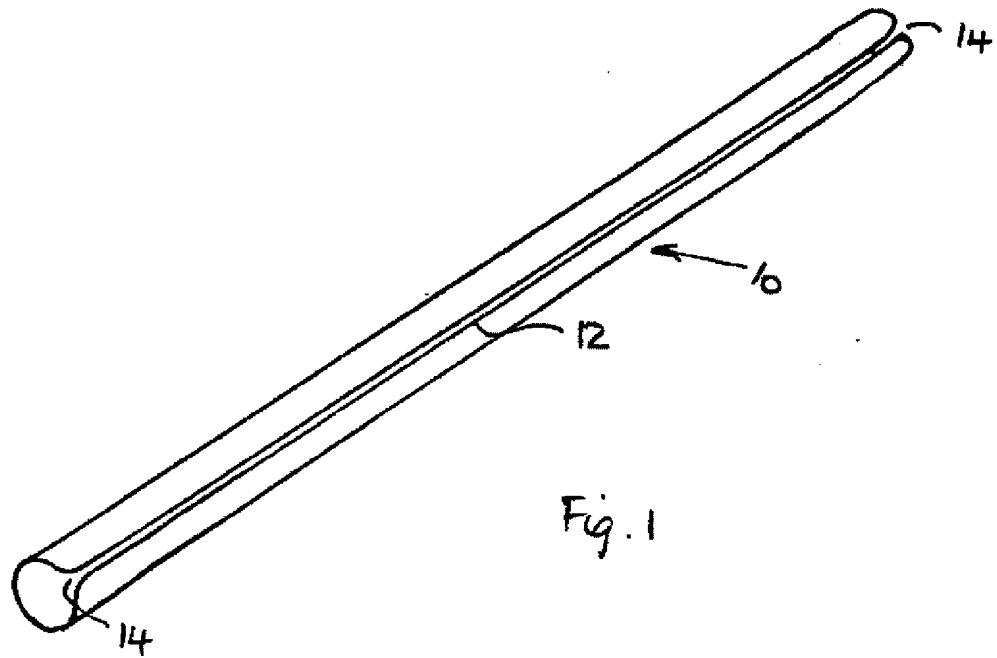


Fig. 1

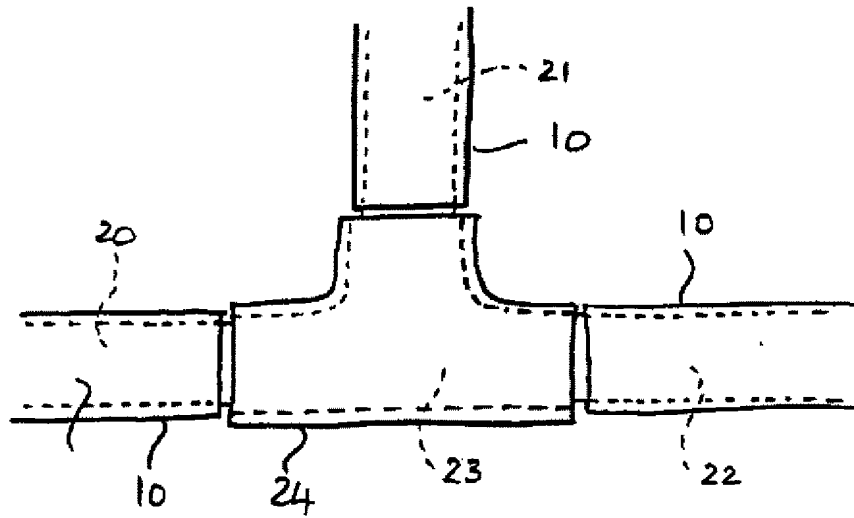


Fig. 2

Decoration of pipes

This invention relates to the decoration of pipes,
particularly pipes forming part of domestic plumbing or
5 central heating systems.

Where pipes are exposed in a room, and the room is decorated
it is desirable to decorate the pipes also so that they do
not form an eyesore.

10 Pipes can be boxed in, and the box decorated conventionally
but the boxing-in is a skilled and time consuming job and
makes subsequent access to the pipes difficult. It is
however common to paint exposed pipes but this is a
15 notoriously difficult and time consuming painting job.

According to the present invention, there is provided a
method of decorating a pipe, wherein a plastics tube having
a decorative finish and longitudinally split parallel to the
20 tube axis is fitted around the pipe so as to be a snug fit
thereon.

Use of a pipe with a longitudinal split enables the tube to
be fitted onto the pipe after the pipe installation has been
25 completed, and also allows the tube to be removed at a later
stage either for access to the pipe work or for cleaning of
the decorative finish on the tube.

This invention makes decoration of pipes particularly easy
30 and uses only simple and low cost materials.

By "decorative finish" is meant that the finish is
comparable to that of other decoration materials, in
particular comparable to a painted surface, in its ability
35 to withstand staining, loss of surface texture such as

gloss, and chipping under normal conditions of exposure and when subjected to conventional cleaning techniques.

5 Many pipe fittings such as brackets for holding the pipe to the wall, T-joints and elbows are standard sizes and shapes, and can be decorated in a complementary manner by suitably moulded snap-on covers with the decorative finish matching that of the decorative finish on the tube.

10 The invention also provides pipe decoration material comprising a plastics tube having a decorative finish and a longitudinal split parallel to the tube axis.

15 It is important that the slit in the tube should lie parallel to the tube axis, rather than following for example a helical path, because the slit should be positioned at the back of the pipe when the decorative tube is in place, so that the slit is not visible.

20 The slit may be a simple cut along the length of the tube, or alternatively there may be some material removed so that there is a longitudinal slot the length of the tube wall.

25 At one end of the tube, the slit or slot may widen to provide a lead-in portion allowing the end of the tube to be easily fitted over a pipe.

30 Copper pipe for plumbing is sold in two standard sizes, 15 and 22mm outside diameters. The inside diameter of the plastics tube is preferably slightly smaller than the outside diameter of the pipe on which it is to be fitted so that the tube is a tight fit. However if the tube is too much smaller than the pipe, it will be too difficult to apply, and it is suggested that the internal diameter of the
35 tube be in the range of either 13mm to 15mm, or in the range 20mm to 22mm.

The invention also provides a kit of parts for decorating a pipe run, comprising a plastics tube having a decorative finish and longitudinally split parallel to the tube axis, and at least one snap-on cover having the same decorative finish as the plastics tube and adapted to be clipped over a bend or joint in the pipe run.

Each cover will be designed to fit a particular shape of pipe joint and can be formed by moulding with suitable clips to hold the cover in place whilst presenting a decorative finish to the front.

Any appropriate form of decorative finish can be used, but it is likely that a plain gloss finish will be most frequently used. It is however conceivable that tubes with patterned or differently coloured finishes may be offered to match or contrast with other decorating materials.

It is useful if the tube material has some insulating properties because in this way the pipe may be given a limited degree of insulation which can in particular help to avoid the formation of condensation on the pipe surface.

The invention will now be further described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawing in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a plastics tube forming pipe decoration material in accordance with the invention; and

Figure 2 is an elevation of a T-joint in a pipe to which pipe decoration material has been applied.

The tube in Figure 1 is a length of plastics tubing which is formed with a longitudinal split 12 down its entire length. At each end of the split there is a widened mouth 14.

The tube will preferably be made of a material which can be easily cut to the required length, and maybe sold in standard lengths. When a new length is cut, a mouth 14 can be formed at the end with a standard trimming knife.

5

In use, where an exposed pipe is to be provided with a decorated finish, a length of tube 10 is cut to match the unobstructed length of the pipe, and is then simply press fitted over the pipe. The tube stays in position because it grips around the pipe, and will be positioned so that the split 12 is at the back of the pipe where it is not visible.

15 Where for example the pipe is held to the wall by brackets which do not cover the entire circumference of the pipe, then part of the tube may be cut away where it registers with the bracket so that a continuous tube length can be used to span past the brackets.

20 However where there is an exposed elbow or T-joint, a separate cover unit will be needed, and a suitable cover unit for a T-joint is shown in Figure 2. In Figure 2, three straight lengths of pipe 20, 21 and 22 are shown which are all connected together by a conventional T-joint 23. The
25 pipes 20, 21 and 22 are all decorated with lengths of tube 10 in the manner already described. The T-joint 23 is decorated by a cover 24 which will have an external finish the same as the external finish of the tubes 10, and which will be constructed so that it will be a snap fit over the
30 T-joint.

In this way a continuous uniform decorated finish is applied to the whole piping system in an extremely simple manner, and the decoration can be removed for maintenance of the
35 piping, and then replaced.

Where a pipe run includes non-standard bends, it may be possible to follow such bends with a plastics tube as described, possibly after applying heat to produce a plastic deformation of the tube.

5

It is best if the tube 10 is a tight fit around the pipe and this can be accomplished by making the internal diameter of the tube slightly smaller than the external diameter of the pipe. Domestic plumbing installations conventionally use
10 either 15mm or 22mm o.d. pipe and the internal diameter of the tubes 10 can conveniently be 1 or 2 millimetres smaller.

The tube 10 can either be made of a material which naturally
15 has an external surface of a decorative quality, or can be coated in a separate process. The tube and/or the coating should of course be resistant to colour changes resulting from age and/or exposure to radiation.

20 The pipe material may be chosen so as to have insulating properties. For example the pipe walls may be of composite material with an insulating layer beneath a decorative outer layer. Alternatively the material may be a single type of material with insulating properties.

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The invention thus provides a very quick cheap and simple way to decorate exposed pipes and allows the application of some basic insulation to the pipes.

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Claims:

1. A method of decorating a pipe, wherein a plastics tube having a decorative finish and longitudinally split parallel to the tube axis is fitted around the pipe so as
5 to be a snug fit thereon.
2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein moulded, snap-on covers are provided to decorate pipe fittings in a complimentary manner.
3. Pipe decoration material comprising a plastics tube
10 having a decorative finish and a longitudinal split parallel to the tube axis.
4. Pipe decoration material as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the slit is a simple cut along the length of the tube.
- 15 5. Pipe decoration material as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the tube, in its relaxed state, does not form a complete cylinder and the slit is an open slit.
6. Pipe decoration material as claimed in any one of Claims 3 to 5, wherein the slit or slot widens at one end
20 of the tube to provide a lead-in portion allowing the end of the tube to be easily fitted over a pipe.
7. A method of decorating a pipe, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawing.
8. Pipe decoration material substantially as herein
25 described with reference to the accompanying drawing.